

The Migrant Education Program

The Migrant Education Program is a national program that annually provides supplemental education and supportive services to approximately 500,000 eligible migrant children to help them overcome educational disruptions and disadvantages which result from their mobile lifestyle. The Migrant Education Program grew out of Title 1 of Public Law 89-10, passed in 1965, to assist all disadvantaged children. Since migrant children have specific needs, they require special help and services. Thus, the Migrant Education Program was established separately by an amendment to Title 1 in 1966. Over the years it has been amended and recently was reauthorized under “The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001”.

WHY GIVE SPECIAL HELP TO MIGRANT CHILDREN?

Most school programs (including those supported by Title 1) are set upon nine- month academic year. However, when migrant children move with their families, their education, as well as their lives, are interrupted. They may come from large families with inadequate living space and low incomes. Poor nutrition, housing and sanitary conditions may cause a high incidence of health problems. They often have limited English skills and/or little experience with success at school. These problems combined with irregular attendance often lead to frustration and low-academic performance, causing many children to drop out of school in their early teens. Because migrant youth have limited knowledge of, and preparation for, other kinds of jobs, they face a high risk of unemployment or become part of the migrant labor force. With help from the Migrant Education Program, migrant children can develop their self-confidence and begin to feel good about themselves. They can begin to enjoy school, attain an education and overcome the many difficulties in their lives.

WHAT IS A MIGRANT WORKER?

Migrant workers seek temporary or seasonal jobs in agriculture, fishing or related work including food processing. They follow the growing seasons across the country and are largely responsible for the cultivation and harvest of fruits, vegetables and many other food products. Many migrant workers have an average annual income below the national poverty level. The migrant population is made up of diverse ethnic. Nationally, Hispanics, blacks, whites, Native Americans and Asians complete the overall population. Each part of the country has its own ethnic composition, with such distinct groups as Russian Old Believers in the northwest, Haitians and Puerto Ricans on the east coast, and Indochinese in the Pacific and Gulf coastal states. Mexican Americans and Central Americans follow migration patterns all over the country.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR THE MIGRANT EDUCATION PROGRAM?

To qualify for the program, a migrant child must have moved within the past three years across state or school district lines with a migrant parent or guardian to enable the child (in the case of secondary youth), the child's guardian or parent, or member of the child's immediate family to obtain temporary or seasonal employment in an agricultural or fishing activity. The child may be in any grade between preschool and grade 12 and must not be above 21 years of age.

THE MONTANA MIGRANT PROGRAM

The Montana Office of Public Instruction(OPI) receives a grant annually from the Office of Migrant Education (OME),United States Department of Education (USDE) based on the number of identified migrant students that reside in the State of Montana. In 2000-2001 the Montana Migrant Education Program (MEP) identified approximately 1800 migrant students. A very large percentage of these students migrate from the states of Montana and Washington. Other students migrate both within the state across school district and county boundaries and from Montana to other states.

Since these children enroll temporarily in various schools, the Montana MEP has a major responsibility to ensure that coordination across program, school district and state lines occur. The Montana MEP has the responsibility to ensure that migrant students at all grade levels and their families have their needs met and

are able to access all services for which they are eligible.

Section 1301 of Title I, Part C, of the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 (Public Law 103-382) specifically stated that the purpose of these funds is to assist states to:

"(1) support high quality and comprehensive educational programs for migratory children to help reduce the educational disruptions and other problems that result from repeated moves;

(2) ensure that migratory children are provided with appropriate educational services (including supportive services) that address their special needs in a coordinated and efficient manner;

(3) ensure that migratory children have the opportunity to meet the same challenging State content standards and challenging State student performance standards that all children are expected to meet;

(4) design programs to help migratory children overcome educational disruptions, cultural and language barriers, social isolation, various health-related problems, and other factors that inhibit the ability of such children to do well in school, and to prepare such children to make a successful transition to post secondary education or employment; and

(5) ensure that migratory children benefit from State and local systematic reforms."

The Montana MEP is 100 percent federally funded. Under this mandate, the federal funds that Montana receives are distributed to the school districts based on the needs of the children identified and their concentration within a particular school district or county. Approximately fifteen school districts, and /or local operating agencies and fiscal cooperative arrangements are currently receiving these funds to operate migrant programs.

The Goal of the Montana Migrant Education Program

The goal of the Montana Migrant Education Program (MEP) is to provide leadership to the field regarding programs and services that promote academic excellence and equity for the migrant students of Montana. To achieve this goal, the Montana MEP strives to create conditions which empower educators working with migrant children to collaborate in designing programs which build upon student strengths, eliminate barriers, provide continuity of education, and produce levels of performance for migrant students that meet or exceed those of

the general student population. Parental involvement is viewed as an essential part of the educational process, and home-school-community partnerships provide the support necessary to improve student achievement.

Mission of the Montana MEP

Because issues of mobility, language and poverty affect the migratory student's opportunities to receive excellence and equity in the classroom, the MEP strives to provide an educational experience which can help children reduce the educational disruptions, and other problems that can result from repeated moves. During the regular school year, in areas with concentrations of migrant children, migrant education projects can operate in support of, and in coordination with, the regular school program. During the summer, at the peak of Montana's agricultural season, educational programs are set up exclusively for migrant children since regular school programs are not in operation for the most part during that time. In Montana migrant education projects are located in counties all across the state.

To ensure that migrant children are provided appropriate services including support services that address their special needs in a coordinated and efficient manner, the MEP with the assistance of local operating agency personnel have identified the following *areas of focus* to be addressed by the Montana Migrant Education Program:

- Identification and Recruitment of all eligible children who reside in the state on an on-going basis; [Identification and Recruitment \(Ages 3-21\)](#)
- An assurance of sequence and continuity between schools in the instructional program by coordinating the use of curriculum, instructional methods, assessment systems through participation in programs such as Project SMART-Summer Migrants Access Resources through technology, www.tea.state.tx.us/SpecialPopulationa/MigrantEducation/Documents) an instructional television broadcast for migrant students; Project ESTRELLA (www@estrella.org), a lap-top computer project for mobile youth; and PASS, Portable Assisted Study Sequence, (www.pass@migrant.net);
- Special teachers, tutors or aides to work with students individually or in

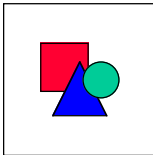
small groups on areas of academic weakness;

- Summer school programs to supplement the regular school program;
- Participation in the New Generation System of electronic record transfer (*New Generation System (Ages 0-21)*)
- Supportive health services, including emergency medical or dental services; nutritional services, in coordination with other agencies;
- Preschool and kindergarten programs designed to prepare migrant children for a successful school experience;
- Assistance with Bilingual or ESL instruction for those children who speak little or no English in cooperation with other federal ESL and Title VII services;
- Intercultural education, including participation in the Binational Education Initiative, teacher exchange and textbook initiatives;(www.escort.org);
- Coordination with Department of Labor Program for adults and secondary youth.

The Montana Migrant Education Program is also involved with these **Special**

Initiatives, Annual Events and Special Projects

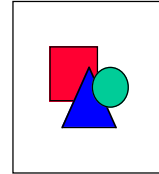
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**The Montana Migrant Education Program's Areas of Focus
Identification and Recruitment (Ages 3-21)
New Generation System for Migrant Student Record Transfer (Ages 3-21)**

Project SMART

TECHMOBILE

PASS

ESTRELLA

Project MASTERY

Montana Youth Grant

Other Areas of Interest

[Special Initiatives and Projects](#)

[Documents and Publications](#)

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